

L.A. WEEKLY

Free

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We also recommend:

Nevis Mountain Dew at the L.A. Actors Theater, *Three by Beckett*, also at the L.A. Actors Theater, and *Towards Zero* at American Theater Arts.

THREE BY BECKETT These are not plays of vigor. They are immersions into night, into age, into the contemplation of death. They are brief spare essences of language and passage, very

beautiful, cellular distillations; they are, in Beckett's own words, "profounds of mind." The first: We are confronted with an aged woman in a rocking chair in long black bombazine with beads of jet. She rocks and she rocks and she breathes the word, "More" and we are given the language in her mind, a hypnotic, almost chant-like stream, a tape recording. Three times she breathes the word, "More" and the stream flows on, repetitious, micromarching towards the end, when she says, "Time she was her own other. Rock her off. Stop her eyes. Fuck life." The second: Two men sit at a table, two ancient men with long grey hair, both in long black overcoats. One has an open book before him. He begins to read: "Little is left to tell. . . ." The other, listening intently with downcast eyes, occasionally raps on the table with his knuckles. The reader, with Dylan Thomas-like intoning, reads on, "reads the sad tale through again," a poem (?) of the abstraction of time past. When the reader ceases, the two look at each other, they are as one. The third: A woman is alone onstage. She wears clothes of a century past, she is swathed in voluminous skirts and shawls. She paces forth and back, she says, "Mother." She talks to herself, to her mother (the offstage voice of Bea Silvern), to us. We gather that she is never free of the intensity of Mother. You will not be 'entertained' by these plays in the usual sense. They are simple, they are not hard, but they are not easy. If you seek something uplifting, go elsewhere. Alan Mandell directed. Mandell, Martin Beck, and Beatrice Manley appear. Their work is excellent. Los Angeles Actors Theater, 1089 N. Oxford Ave.; Mon.-Wed., 8 p.m.; thru March 28. Call 464-5500.

—Judith Auberjonois



Beatrice Manley in Samuel Beckett's *Footfalls*, at the Los Angeles Actors' Theater

Roger Goldengay